

RETURN & REUNION THE MELDING OF A FAMILY

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AT LAST! THEY ARE COMING HOME!

- The emotions whirl around in your body.
- Anticipation builds.
- When, where, how??
- What do I do??
- What will they be like?
- What will it be like to have them home?
- Dreaming about the reunion together.



Preparing for the Homecoming

- Make it special.
- Stay flexible.
- Kids first.
- Stay confident.
- Negotiate activities.
- Make individual Time.
- Be patient!!!
- Adjust gradually.
- Check budget changes.



The Adrenaline Flows

- You want everything to be perfect for the homecoming..Does it have to be?? Why??
- How many men even care or notice that the house glistens from top to bottom??
- How many men care if their children are all dressed up and perfect??
- How many men care if their first dinner at home is by candlelight??
- Now women do care about the house, children and candlelight.

THE READJUSTMENT PERIOD

- Anxiety is a natural & normal part of getting back to together with family and friends.
- Realize that people change. You have, and they have.
- Single parents and service members also have anxiety about fitting back into their home environment.
- Forget your fantasies about the homecoming. Take it easy and let things happen.
- Don't expect things to be exactly the same as when you left. Your family had a life while you were gone. If you have this expectation, you may have a very hard time.
- Some things will change but much will remain the same.
- Accept and Share your Feelings..Communicate, Communicate, Communicate. It takes 6-8 weeks to adjust.

Homecoming Fears & Feelings

- **Yours-** Has my spouse changed? Have I done well with money issues? Did I do well with the kids? Will we still have things to talk about? Does my spouse still love me & need me?
- **Kids:** Will dad/mom come meet my teacher? **Will the rules change?** Will I get punished because I wasn't always good? **Will mom/dad leave again?**
- **Service members** - Will my family still need me? Will the kids recognize me? How did things go while I was gone? **Will they be happy to see me? Do they still love me?**

Reunion Tips-You

- Expect your spouse to be different, you are!
- They may not want scheduled & pre-planned events.
- Avoid tight schedules.
- Driving may be something they haven't done for awhile.
- Expect them to have difficulty sleeping.
- Expect them to be surprised you did so well.
- Don't be defensive about the children.
- Expect it to take time to re-establish sexual intimacy.

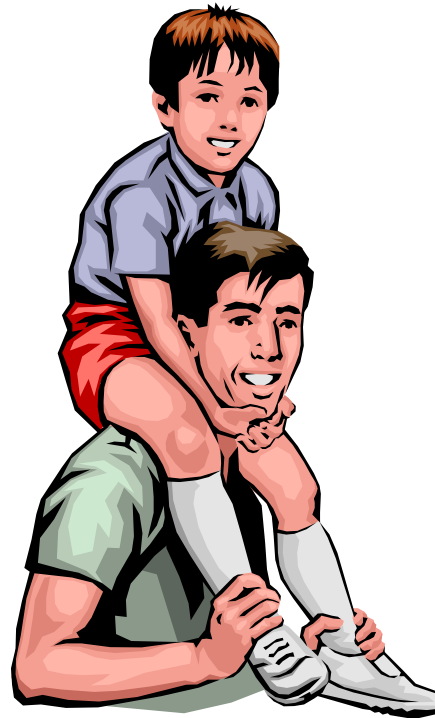


Expect to make adjustments. Don't look for clues that aren't there.

**TRUST,
LOVE, AND
PATIENCE-
THE KEYS
TO A
HAPPY
REUNION.**

Reunion Tips-Children

- **Give the Children Time to Adjust:** It takes time for a child to accept a parent who has been gone. Young children may be mad at mom/dad for leaving them. Babies may be afraid of dad/mom because they've not recently seen them.
- Expect kids to test the limits and have a variety of emotional feelings. Encourage them to talk about their feelings.



- Plan time for each child to spend with the returning parent.
- Stay involved with school and activities. Don't drop things because mom/dad has returned. Include them in if they want.

Reunion Tips - Service Member

- Be patient & expect changes.
- Consider yourself a guest. Give your family and yourself time to get readjusted.
- Let adjustments come naturally rather than force it.
- Support positive changes. Show pleasure at how your family has grown.
- Take it easy on the kids, especially where discipline is concerned. Let the current rules stand. Don't barge in as the "Heavy".
- Don't try and alter financial affairs.
- Expect your spouse to be a little envious of travels. Go easy on telling them about the "good" times you had.
- Slip away for a second honeymoon later. Reaffirm your bond with the children first.
- Expect sex to be awkward at first. Talk it over.
- Expect your spouse to be different.
- Above all Talk with your loved ones! TRUST, LOVE AND PATIENCE!!

THE READJUSTMENT PERIOD-COUPLES

- Focus on the marriage, share experiences, feelings & needs. Avoid forcing issues.
- Both partners may feel that they are strange together. Spouses may feel intrusion on routines, Service members may feel isolated, unwanted and unneeded. These feelings can cause arguments and hurt feelings.
- Don't play the "Heavy" with questions which can be interpreted as judgmental, not just curious.
- Too much togetherness at this point can cause friction. Give each other space and support.
- Spouses may feel a loss of freedom and independence. Re-negotiate roles and responsibilities.
- Stop being single & **start being married again**. Move from "my" and "I" to "we" and "us". Begin to share the making of decisions together.

Benefits???

- Mobilization cannot cure a relationship in trouble!
- It can help re-open all lines of communication, verbal non-verbal, physical & sexual. But you have to be willing to put yourself out there.
- Talk about your fears, hopes, dreams and ask for theirs as well.



Remember.....When.....



- Honest, caring communication can re-open the door to the way things were back before responsibilities, and time got too short to talk.



On
behalf of
a
grateful
nation,
thank
you for
all that
you do
as a
military
family!